

CLAIMS

1. A process for the production of conjugated linoleic acid, in which

(a) linoleic acid lower alkyl esters are isomerized in the presence of
5 alkali metal alcoholates,

(b) the now conjugated linoleic acid lower alkyl esters are saponified
with water in the presence of lye and

(c) the saponification product is neutralized with phosphoric acid.

10 2. A process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that linoleic acid
lower alkyl esters corresponding to formula (I):



(I)

15 where R^1CO is the acyl group of a linoleic acid and R^2 is a linear or
branched alkyl group containing 1 to 5 carbon atoms,
are used.

3. A process as claimed in claims 1 and/or 2, characterized in that the
isomerization step is carried out at temperatures of 90 to 150°C.

20 4. A process as claimed in at least one of claims 1 to 3, characterized
in that the saponification step is carried out at temperatures of 40 to 90°C.

5. A process as claimed in at least one of claims 1 to 4, characterized
in that the saponification step is continued to a cleavage level of 80 to
100% by weight.

25 6. A process as claimed in at least one of claims 1 to 5, characterized
in that the neutralization step is carried out with phosphoric acid at
temperatures of 50 to 90°C.

7. A process as claimed in at least one of claims 1 to 6, characterized
in that the phase separation following the neutralization step is carried out
30 at temperatures of 50 to 100°C.